

PLATTE LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Dear PLIA Member:

We have news to share as to the state of the lake, hatchery and the zoning ordinance issues.

I'll begin with the zoning issues. As you remember, the Benzie County Planning Commission and related staff prepared a draft ordinance that was distributed at the August 2004 Annual meeting. The draft essentially proposed to make a buffer strip out of the first 25 feet of your beach and only allow a four foot wide path to the lake. The membership at the Annual Meeting voted unanimously to oppose the ordinance. Additionally, the PLIA by-laws were modified and approved at a properly noticed special meeting held on Saturday September 4, 2004. The membership present at the meeting voted unanimously to approve the by-law change which will allow the PLIA Board to move forward and oppose zoning ordinance changes that are not in the best interest of the lake.

Since that time, your Officers and Board have attended several Benzie County as well as Lake Township Planning Commission meetings. We conducted a three hour presentation to the Benzie County Planning Commission on October 21, 2004 with Gary Whelan, Dr. Canale and myself to educate all as to the MDNR/PLIA Settlement agreement, status of the lake as it related to the 8.0 ug/l phosphorus standard, completed and ongoing water quality studies and related findings. Dr. Canale also prepared an analysis of the phosphorus impact on the lake of the proposed 25 ft buffer zone versus having people simply periodically remove beach debris and mow and bag grass/clippings and dispose of such that they could not re-enter the lake. Buffer strips which would take away your beach saved approx 2.5 lbs P versus cleaning, mowing and bagging grass saved 152 lb P! So much for the environmental effectiveness of the draft ordinance. A similar three hour presentation was made to the Lake Township Planning Commission on December 7, 2004.

At both presentations we also presented a list of seven effective phosphorus reduction measures that Dr. Canale, Gary Whelan and I agreed upon. Additionally we extended an offer to help in any way possible to draft legally defensible ordinance that would aid in the attainment and maintenance of the Platte Lake 8.0 ug/l liter phosphorus standard.

A rather hastily arranged January 25, 2005 meeting was held at the Lake Township Hall. The Benzie Conservation District attempted to defend their case for buffer strips to the Lake Township Planning Commission. The PLIA was able to attend in force and reiterated our objections to the Benzie County Draft ordinance, etc. Since Platte Lake is located in two townships, Lake and Benzonia, the Benzie County Planning and Zoning staff is requesting the same ordinance for the entire lake. The County's draft ordinance is different than Lake Townships and as I mentioned before a "land grab" in its present form. That is the form they presented to the Lake Township Planning Commission. I must also point out that Lake Township has not adopted county zoning and anything the Lake Township Planning Commission recommends must be passed by the Lake Township board.

After discussion with PLIA officers, etc. the PLIA will propose a Platte Lake Overlay District based on the Crystal Lake Overlay District and a modification of the existing Lake Township zoning ordinance. It is our intent to include the 8.0 ug/l phosphorus standard and as many of the agreed upon phosphorus reduction measures as applicable, etc. I appreciate as many ideas and input from the membership at large. If Crystal Lake has a separate overlay district, Platte Lake can obviously have one designed for Platte Lake. We will keep you posted on how this is going on our WEB page and by newsletter. I don't feel this is the time for a massive letter writing and phone campaign. If the respective planning commissions are not sincere in working with us, etc. that will be the time to become extremely

aggressive. Remember, the PLIA will fight this from an environmental standpoint. What is proposed does not make a lot of sense. It will be up to each of us to fight this from an individual property owner standpoint when and if the time comes. At this time I feel we need to continue to work with the respective planning commissions to achieve our phosphorus reduction goals at minimal or no impact to existing or future property use. Your Officers and Board feel it can be done.

As to Platte Lake, I must say it was better in 2004 than in 2003. The 8.0 ug/l phosphorus standard was exceeded 22% of the time or 80 days in 2004 as opposed to 50% of the time or 183 days in 2003. Median phosphorus level of 7.10 ug/l in 2004 versus 8.12 ug/l in 2003. Until that standard is achieved and maintained, phosphorus reduction is imperative. The Hatchery is doing its job; total discharge is 154 lb P in 2004 versus 170 lb P in 2003. We need to reduce phosphorus from other sources. Other sources are you and me and everyone else around the lake and in the watershed. Please see the enclosed phosphorus reduction measures. Please contact us with questions.

Please note we are still moving forward with our extensive lake, river and hatchery monitoring plan. Preliminary results on our 2004 zebra mussel survey indicated that the population is increasing exponentially and expect more mussels in 2005. Analysis of Platte Lake bottom core samples continues as well as algal and zooplankton studies. As soon as the reports become available, they will be posted on the web page. Fish samples are still being collected for mercury analysis. If you have a large pike, walleye, bass or catfish, please freeze and take to the hatchery and ask them to put it in the freezer for the Platte Lake mercury analysis study. Additionally, we expect to have another attempt this spring to remove additional long nosed gar to help pave the way for an improved northern pike and walleye population.

As it relates to septic systems, the commercial septic/holding tank pumpers have asked Jerry Heiman to pass along a bit of news so you can prepare for your return next summer. Now that the upgrade to the Frankfort treatment facility is finally done, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Dept. has decreed that any pump outs within 15 road miles of Frankfort must be off-loaded there instead of field disposal, effective Dec. 1, 2004. This is in response to the EPA effort to end all field disposals. The bad news is that the facility charges 3 cents/gallon to the pumper. This will be passed on to you in addition to the \$125 basic charge. Please don't vent your frustration to the hauler, as they had nothing to do with this decision. They maintain they can't reduce the \$125 pumping fee because the extra time required going to Frankfort and wait for pump out, to say nothing of the extra fuel, more than cancels the time saving of not having to till into the field. Maybe a good time to start looking at those alternative on-site disposal systems or a multiple family pump-back project such as the one being put together on Lakewood Dr. Please contact us with any questions.

I would like to personally thank all those involved for all their time and direct effort and I want to thank the membership at large for all their continued support!

What can you do? Send in your dues and any contributions you can afford. We are an IRS 501C3 organization and all contributions are fully tax deductible.

Also, please feel free to call me, write or e-mail with any questions, comments or concerns at any time. As stated before, you are our eyes and ears and if you see, hear or read about something that raises a concern in your mind, please pass it along to ensure that I and the PLIA Board are also aware. Downstate: 248-553-3110, e-mail: wswiecki@twmi.rr.com

Thanks,



Wilfred Swiecki
President, PLIA

PHOSPHORUS REDUCTION PROPOSALS

- TAKE REMEDIAL ACTION ON KNOWN EROSION SITES.
- STOP PHOSPHORUS ADDITION THROUGH FERTILIZATION i.e. PHOSPHATE FERTILIZER BAN.
- REMOVAL OF ORGANIC BEACH DEBRIS.
- PERIODICALLY HARVEST LAKE AND RIVER SIDE VEGETATION, LEAVES, ETC. AND DISPOSE SUCH THAT IT CANNOT RE-ENTER THE WATER AND DECAY.
- MANDATE BAGGING OF LAWN CLIPPINGS FOR HOME OWNERS AND LAWN SERVICES.
- WATER WITH LAKE AND OR RIVER WATER.
- ESTABLISH A COUNTY COMPOSING SITE WHERE ORGANIC DEBRIS CAN BE DEPOSITED.
- EDUCATE PEOPLE TO CONVERT FESCUE LAWNS TO NATURAL LAWNS.
- ENFORCE THE BENZIE COUNTY SEPTIC SYSTEM ORDINANCE.

PLEASE NOTE: Buffer strips are not effective over the long term at removing phosphorus. They are only effective at phosphorus reduction where they can mitigate stream bank erosion where other options such as rock lining, etc. are not economically practical. They are not value added in the attainment and long term maintenance of the Platte Lake 8.0 Microgram per liter phosphorus standard.